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FOR NEA/ARP:AMACDONALD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: ROYG OPERATION GRABS 55 SUSPECTED EXTREMISTS

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen A. Seche for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On April 4, Major General Ali al-Ashwal briefed EmbOff on the ten-day assault undertaken by the Yemeni Army and security forces against extremist armed gangs, including suspected terrorists in the town of Ja'ar in the governorate of Abyan. (Note: Al-Qaeda has long been known to maintain a strong presence in Ja'ar. End Note.) According to Ashwal, the operation led to the arrest of 55 suspects, including some members of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army. ROYG forces suffered one death and two injuries. Staff Brigadier General Mujahid Ghushain, the Yemeni Director of Military Intelligence, noted that the last three arrestees were captured on April 3 in the governorate of Shebwa after fleeing the fighting in Abyan. Contrary to previous reports, Ashwal said that no aircraft were used in the attack. He noted that an armored brigade from Zinjibar in Abyan, equipped with U.S. made M-60 A1 tanks and M-113 A2 Armored Vehicles, was the key army force.

¶2. (C) President Saleh told the Ambassador on April 4 that the targets of the operation were individuals who had originally been jihadists, and then had come over to the ROYG's side only to return to their jihadist ways. Ashwal implied that the group had previously had an "agreement" with ROYG authorities and had grossly violated it by attacking a school, ambushing a government convoy, and establishing checkpoints. These activities were seen as challenging ROYG authority in an area with a limited number of ROYG troops.

Comment

¶3. (C) This operation demonstrates that the ROYG is most likely to take effective, kinetic action when it can clearly see that doing so is in its own interests. Post is seeking information from the ROYG on the arrestees and their affiliations.

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